Portfolio

Michael Jones (1980, CA)

Jeanine Hofland
Contemporary Art

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Exhibition:
Tolerance Time, 2009
The Orr gallery, Vancouver (CA)
Jeanine Hofland Contemporary Art, Amsterdamm (NL)













Broken Window, 2009
16mm film
8.04 min.

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Welcome, 2009
ink on whiteboard
91.5 x 61 cm

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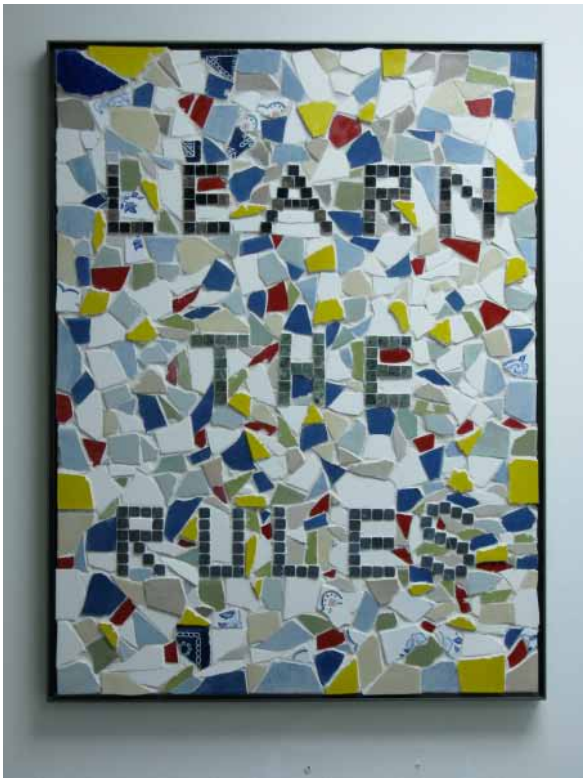

Learn the Rules, 2009
broken mosaic tile
83 x 63 cm

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Unity Circle, 2009
acrylic on paper
90 x 61 cm

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Mosaic, 2009
color photograph
84.5 x 100 cm

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Archival Posters, 2009
selected found posters
variable

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2 x Amsterdam: tolerantie en ketchuphartjes

Galerie Metis_NL en de kersverse galerie van Jeanine Hofland sluiten het politiek bewogen jaar af met een tegengeluid.





Anderhalve maand geleden opende Jeanine Hofland de deuren van haar galerie. Een gedurfde actie van deze voormalige assistente van Juliette Jongma, zowel qua momentum (economische crisis) als qua locatie (Oud-West). Het was een bewuste keuze van haar om in een stadsdeel dat 177 nationaliteiten herbergt te starten met de expositie Tolerance Time van de Canadees Michael Jones. Het afgelopen decennium sloeg in het moederland van deze kunstenaar een ruimhartige acceptatie van ‘anderen’ om in een schamel gedogen: net als in Nederland lijkt in Canada een ogenschijnlijke tolerante volksaard te zijn verworden tot een flinterdun multicultureel vernislaagje.

Hoofdonderdeel van de tentoonstelling is de film Broken Window, waarin de kijker een politieagent een nachtelijke rondgang ziet maken door het gebouw van de Vancouver Multicultural Society. Deze organisatie gaf in de jaren ’80 en ’90 kunstnijverheidscursussen aan immigranten in afwachting van een verblijfsvergunning. Door kunstobjecten te maken, zo was indertijd de heersende gedachte, konden migranten uiting geven aan hun culturele achtergrond, hetgeen bevorderlijk zou zijn voor integratie in de Canadese maatschappij. Nadat er een ruit is ingegooid, belicht de agent (Jones zelf) gedurende zijn tocht door het pand diverse interculturele parafernalia. Op zolder treft hij grote hoeveelheden posters met antiracismeslogans aan. Het zijn allemaal relieken van een periode die niet eens zo ver achter ons ligt.

In het voorste gedeelte van de galerie bevinden zich een aantal werken die deels als documentatie en deels als persoonlijke interpretatie moeten worden opgevat van de objecten die Jones bij de VMS aantrof: in het raam staat een bord dat je in diverse talen welkom heet, op de vloer ligt een klein mozaïek, aan de muur hangt een tekening met daarop een inheems Canadees symbool. Een foto van een gigantisch mozaïek dat zich in het trappenhuis van de VMS bevindt, wordt gepresenteerd als een tafeltje, achter de desk van de galeriehoudster is de muur volgehangen met de antiracismeposters. De manier waarop Jones film, sculptuur, fotografie en found footage met elkaar vermengt, sluit goed aan bij de multimediale agenda die Hofland zegt te gaan voeren. Haar eerste tentoonstelling is een prikkelend geheel, dat te beschouwen valt als een subtiel monument voor de teloorgang van de tolerante samenleving.

Michael Jones, Tolerance Time
te zien t/m 18 december 2010
Jeanine Hofland Contemporary Art

Jaring Dürst Britt, ‘2 x Amsterdam: tolerantie en ketchup hartjes’’, *Metropolis M online*
15 December 2010

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Michael Jones - Tolerance Time

Published on 29 November 2010 | Published in Art | Written by Monte Bergamont



Michael Jones - Broken Window (still)
Jeanine Hofland Contemporary Art
De Clercqstraat 62
www.jeaninehofland.nl
Open Wed-Sat 13.00-18.00
Ends 18 December
Michael Jones - Tolerance Time
As part of its philosophy to represent, promote and support contemporary national and international artists, Jeanine Hofland organizes approximately seven exhibitions yearly and the latest, Tolerance Time by the Canadian artist Michael Jones (1980) is only a few weeks from ending. The exhibition consists of a short, narrative 16mm film projection in which the artist is cast as a police officer. Set in the Vancouver Multicultural Society's administrative offices, Jones' character is seen responding to a disturbance call. As he inspects the premises, the objects, artworks and publicity material associated with officially sanctioned notions of Canadian multiculturalism become the focus of his investigation. Presented alongside a series of posters and sculptures drawn from and responding to the Multicultural Society's archives, Jones' work explores the complex relationship between image, self, authority and security.
In this age of cultural distrust and fear, the very notion of multiculturalism - in a country built on immigration - is examined. The collected works ring particularly heavily for Europeans and North Americans alike as western nations struggle with the idea of immigration, identity and cultural values.

Monte Bergamont, 'Michael Jones: Tolerance Time', *Unfold Amsterdam* 29 November 2010

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Politieke kunst in Oud West

Ondanks het barre economische klimaat opent Jeanine Hofland op 30 oktober aan de De Clercqstraat 62 een nieuwe galerie. Zij denkt dat de tijd van vluchtigheid en hypes even voorbij is, dat er aandachtiger en kritischer gekeken wordt. Naast tentoonstellingen wil Hofland debatten en 'artist talks' organiseren.

Hofland is geen groentje in de kunstwereld. Zij werkte vier jaar bij de galerie van Juliette Jongma, met wie zij op belangrijke kunstbeurzen van New York tot Basel stond. Het idee om een eigen galerie te beginnen ontstond pas toen zij al een tijdje weg was bij Jongma. Hofland constateerde dat wat zij ambieerde - het maken van tentoonstellingen en het ondersteunen van de carrières van kunstenaars - het beste te verwezenlijken zou zijn als galeriehouder. Zij wil zo divers mogelijk programmeren, maar elke tentoonstelling moet bijdragen aan het maatschappelijk debat.

'Elke tentoonstelling moet bijdragen aan het debat'

De eerste kunstenaar die de galerie toont, is de Canadees Michael Jones. In de tentoonstelling getiteld Tolerance Time gebruikt hij film, foto's en objecten om de veranderde betekenis van het woord tolerantie tegen het licht te houden. In de multiculturele samenleving lijkt deze betekenis te zijn verschoven van acceptatie naar het slechts gedogen van andere culturele identiteiten, meent Jones. Een aardige bijkomstigheid is dat de galerie gevestigd is in Oud-West, waar het straatbeeld grotendeels wordt bepaald door een diversiteit aan culturele achtergronden. Voor Hofland is een galerie ook meer dan een plek waar kunst een nieuwe eigenaar krijgt: het moet een platform zijn waar mensen kennis met elkaar en elkaars ideeën kunnen maken.

Michael Jones, Tolerance Time Jeanine Hofland Contemporary Art t/m 10 december

Alexander Mayhew, 'Politieke kunst in Oud-West',*Uitkrant* November 2010, p. 31

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On Tolerance Time

A conversation with Michael Jones

Paul Kajander: In most of your work in film, you cast yourself as player – not quite acting, not quite performing. You are visible and recognizable to varying degrees in the particular situations that you've constructed. In this new film you appear as a very loaded character through the use of specific signifiers such as the police uniform. Why do you use yourself in these films?

Michael Jones: I'm acting as the agent that puts into operation the objects and ideas that interest me. I cast myself in these films, rather than actors, because it is a way for me to work directly with the possibilities of meaning that these forms and situations present, rather than focusing on the relationship between actors and myself.

PK: In all the films that I've seen, your behaviour is deadpan and the projected image is never accompanied by audio. What is your relationship to early silent film?

MJ: My use of silent black and white film is evocative of classic silent cinema and my relationship to it is by way of 1960's performance art. The deadpan humor in a Buster Keaton gag emerges to Bruce Nauman's psychological closet dramas, such as his 1966 silent black and white film ***Smoke***. This simple shot of an artist smoking exemplifies the lacks of conceptual art practices where meaning and understanding were based so much on assumptions and clichés.

PK: I'm happy you mention Keaton. I immediately thought about him in relation to your appearance in these films, though important distinctions quickly come to mind; Keaton's deadpan is humorous as the counterpoint to some outrageously calamitous situation. His films tend to centre on problems/gags that give his dispassionate disposition its comic resonance. Keaton's ghost is in your work via Nauman, but it's a diluted relationship. In the earlier film-works of yours that I've seen, the objects, ideas and situations you've presented invoke pointlessness. You're seen performing an absurd task, such as spraying fake fog in a cemetery... or mixing dehydrated beer crystals into a glass of water in a bar. In ***Broken Window***, there is a more balahoned use of filmic conventions to produce narrative. It isn't just a continuous shot, it's an edited sequence, showing your movement through an obscure interior. You talk about not focusing on the relationship between actors and yourself – which makes me think that you invest the production of your work with a kind of psychological significance. What kind of psychological space are you inhabiting when you are working with the implicit questions around violence, authority and multiculturalism in this new work?

MJ: The psychological space you've mentioned interests me in terms of a contemporary worldview. The themes of violence and authority in this work are in response to what the world has seen since September 11, 2001 and the subsequent rise of "crime dramas" in mainstream culture that fuel society's obsession with security. It seems to me that this mania has occurred at the expense of the more tolerant society that was familiar to me growing up in the 1980's and 90's. ***Broken Window*** suggests that multiculturalism has had to change and adapt through various events of the 21st Century... It is a different moment and, in fact, the residue of 20th Century multicultural material now appears incredibly antiquated.

PK: It's interesting that you trace the rise in crime dramas to September 11. Subsequent to that moment the fixation on irrational or inconceivable violence has risen steadily. So, when an identifiable group – whether religiously or politically motivated – commits an act of violence and this act of violence occupies a large part of popular consciousness, we have seen that tolerance towards that identifiable group tends to shift. Another way of saying this is that suspicion and discrimination of this particular group appears to rise. What is your sense of the way that Canada conceives of Multicultural policy now?

MJ: Although Canada's Multiculturalism Act wasn't passed until three years after he retired from office in 1984, Pierre Trudeau was responsible for the gradual movement towards a public policy that encouraged Canadians to be loyal citizens while celebrating their individual culture. At the time, a multicultural Canada better represented the large percentage of Canadians who identified themselves as having several ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This is largely how Canada has seen itself since the 1980's but in the past decade it may be thought of as ideological in the face of threats from specific groups.

PK: Multiculturalism in Canada functions largely at the level of representation; in the imagery and public materials, people of various ethnicities are seen cohabiting peacefully. And while we might still hopefully say that peace is the ultimate aim of all intellectuals, unfortunately, we are at pains to agree upon what sort of life ought to be lived in that state of peace. In the end, violence of another order is risked in imposing one notion of "right living" onto people with different beliefs. How are you using the theme of tolerance?

MJ: On one hand exactly how you have described the imagery of peaceful cohabitation. In this sense tolerance is an ideology, a space constructed within an enclosure that provides rule of law and peace where we act as though everything is harmonious. On the other hand tolerance is a form of restraint where negative forces are held at bay for the sake of progress. ***Tolerance Time*** is a description of that space or restraint that enables creativity.

PK: It seems that the multicultural posters you collected were important triggers in the development of your work. Can you talk about the way they function in the exhibition?

MJ: Yes, they are an important source and I spent a lot of time collecting these posters in various places. They were fairly easy to find meaning they were once widely distributed, free publications, mostly produced in the 1980's and 90's which made me think of them as relics of our recent history. In their depiction of racial harmony, these posters also represent a version of "right living".

PK: You practice a lot of restraint in the production of drama in your film. The violent gesture is relatively harmless and is not clearly motivated. The cop doesn't seem terribly concerned in investigating the scene. You don't tell us a lot but you show us a great deal. How do you think about the openness the film affords?

MJ: Openness is a common feature in my work. Here my main objective was to deal with the ephemera of multiculturalism through examining this material from the past. I cast myself as a police officer in a dramatic show as a means to do so. It was necessary to keep the narrative on the low side so that these objects and posters would come to the forefront.

PK: I can't help but think of these layers of representation – the way that the light from the policeman's torch illuminates the arts & crafts projects, official signage and a figurative cardboard cut-out in the VMS' offices. When did you first visit the multicultural society and what were your first impressions of this material residue of their history?

MJ: The flashlight was a way for me to direct the viewer's attention to the objects and structure a narrative around them. I came across the VMS and uncovered the objects in a very similar way to how this is depicted in the film. The building was empty and dark and I perused the objects that I came across in the corridors. Eventually I acquired access to the offices, the library and the attic where I found piles of posters and banners and a cardboard cut out of a man; all the things that the VMS had used in their activities and promotions of multiculturalism over the past 30 years. It felt like I had discovered something that had long been set aside and knew right away that I would make a film about it.

Michael James Jones was born in Canada in 1980. From 1999-2003 he attended the Alberta College of Art and Design, obtaining a B.F.A in Media Arts and Digital Technologies. He later received an M.F.A in Fine Art Media from the Slade School of Fine Art, in London, U.K. He currently works in Vancouver.

The Or Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the British Columbia Arts Council, the City of Vancouver, our members, donors, and volunteers. The Or Gallery is a member of the Pacific Association of Artist Run Centres (PAARC).

Michael would like to thank the following people for their support in making this project: Craig Trudeau, Amit Hawaldaram, Sargeant Singh, Sargent Bruce and Constable McGuinness of the Vancouver Police Department; Corbin Sabeken and Simon Fraser University Fine Art Department, MacLeod's Books, Criterion Books, The Vancouver Multicultural Society and Aliya Hirji, Paul Kajander and the Helen Pitt gallery, The Or Gallery, Ross Walker and Derek Walker, Ingrid Boates, Jake Gleason, Martha Watkinson and Jonas Young of Technicolor, Cinesonika and The Canada Council for the Arts.

Paul Kajander,'On Tolerance Time: A conversation with Michael Jones', *The Orr Gallery leaflet*
December 2009

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Exhibition:
Anxiety of Influence, 2006
UCLA New Wight Gallery, Los Angeles (USA)







A Souber Thought, 2006
three 16mm films
1.00 min.

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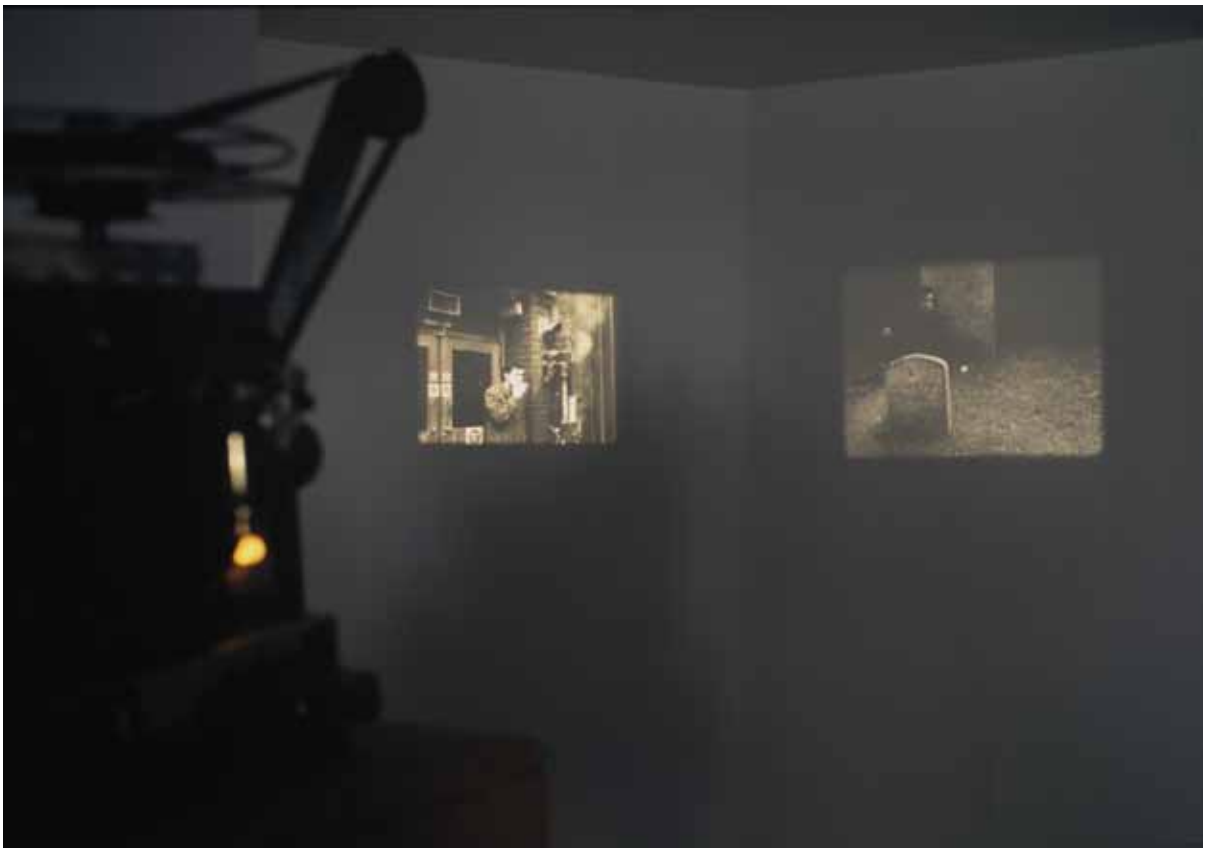

Installation view
A Souber Thought, 2006
three 16mm film-installation
1.00 min.

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2006 Wight Biennial:

ANXIETY OF INFLUENCE

Nov. 9-30, 2006 | UCLA New Wight Gallery

Eli and Edyth Broad Art Center | Tel: 310.825.3281 | Gallery Hours: Monday-Friday 9am – 4.30pm | Reception: Thursday, Nov. 9, 5 - 8pm



Andrea Büttner, *All my favourite artists had problems with alcohol*, 2005
Woodcut on paper, 16 x 24 in. (75 x 46 cm)

The following short passages are connected only insofar as they were written in response to works made by the artists in the 2006 Wight Biennial. These writings, however, are not made in an attempt to see each individual piece as a representation of a larger whole.

Justin Beal, Andrea Büttner, Ben Dowell, Derek Dunlop, Peter Jaques, Michael James Jones, Paul Kajander, Manuela Leal, Oliver Lutz, Emilio J. Narciso, Michael Euyung Oh, Yo Okada, Isabelle Pauwels, Luis Romero & Suwon Lee, Kim Schoen, Tris Vonna-Michell

We are graduate students in art, first and foremost, and curators only incidentally, and so we are interested in conversing with our peers instead of organizing their work under the aegis of a particular curatorial strategy, or subsuming their work into a synthetic example of that which is current or emerging in art. As Okwui Enwezor has noted, artwork "in any case, is understood a priori to be extraterritorial to an exhibitions logic,"* which we take to mean that artworks have an autonomy resistant to the misreadings given to them under the systematizing attempts of an exhibition. What we have then, might be described as an exercise in extraterritoriality: that is, an exhibition, a catalogue, and a satellite of conversations that seek to emphasize a discursive site, with an international purview, over and above the physical and temporal site of the gallery alone. (JAO)

*Enwezor, Okwui. "The Black Box." Documenta11_Platform 5: Exhibition. Catalogue. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002. 42.

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Sober Spirits, Silver Screens

A question of repetition: a specter is always a revenant. One cannot control its comings and goings because it begins by coming back. – Jacques Derrida

One of MICHAELS JONES' black-and-white 16mm films opens with an electric car whizzing around the Economist Building, an architectural landmark in central London as well as the original location of the opening sequence of Antonioni's *Blow-Up*. The spirit of Swinging London in the sixties returns, now as a toned-down and emptied but nevertheless exhilarating scene. Even though the use of film stock is often associated with nostalgia, Jones works upon this notion of the outmoded to deflect its force. It is as if this past and its cultural-social imagery had never happened, yet we all know it did and continues doing so. The pathetic and grand actions of Jones' performance go between staging and de-staging, both asserting and feigning authenticity while retaining the slapstick elegance of the silent film era. (101)

Derrida, Jacques. *Spectres of Marx*. New York: Routledge, 1994. 1.





Michael James Jones, *A Sober Thought*, 2006. Film still

Film: 16mm, black and white, silent, looping mechanism, dimensions variable

Daniel Horn, 'Sober Spirits, Silver Screen', *Anxiety of Influence*, UCLA New Wight Gallery/ Eli and Edyth Broad Art Center, 2006, p.10-11

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Film Fragments: Michael Jones in conversation with Pablo Lafuente, 16 July 2006

PL Something I find interesting about the way you have chosen to display your work here is that there is something very sculptural about the way you have set up the film projectors in the gallery.

MJ There's a structuralist element to the installation in the sense of being presented as a sum of parts; film stock, lighting, lenses, projector. You're free to move around within the space, which is in opposition to how films are conventionally encountered in cinemas. However the three film loops are presented as fragments, which is the reason for displaying them on three separate projectors.

PL Although the films look like classical cinema meets performance art your also drawing on 1970's expanded cinema by making the viewer aware of this relationship to the mechanisms of presentation, for instance, when moving around the space a viewer gets in the way of the projection beam, blocking the image and making it seem even more present. I think this in turn makes one aware of authorship and draws attention to the actions in the films themselves, which are about artifice. It is clear that you are concentrating on artifice by way of acting out 'the joke'. But from the perspective of your performances, how much of it is a portrait of yourself? How much of you is present in the films?

MJ I'm acting as the agent that puts into operation the objects and ideas that I wish to present. So the films are presented as self-portraits as a means for me to talk about the possibilities of meaning that these forms and situations present, rather than talking about myself.

PL When I first saw these films I immediately made an association to Gilbert and George, in particular a video work entitled 'Gordon's makes us drunk'. Which is basically a static video shot of Gilbert and George gradually getting drunk on Gin in a typical English pub, it was also shot in black and white. But at the same time it is significant that they are actually getting drunk in their video and you're not in yours.

MJ I'm was interested by Gilbert and George' insistence on looking like they are artists. They've constructed, to a mythical extent, a certain faith surrounding themselves as artists who are their art. In the pub fragment I adopted this notion through a performance where I transform water into beer. The joke shop 'fake beer powder' stands in for a miracle.

PL However you're taking this notion a step further. Gilbert and George are also filming what artists are supposed to do; English artists are supposed to get drunk in the pub. You seem to be questioning that cliché. Even as a melancholic artist hanging around a graveyard or the artist smoking, I think there is a constant stereotype of the artist at work here.

MJ I wasn't confronting artist clichés so much as employing them in making performance art in bad faith. By re-constructing 1960's performances, such as Bruce Nauman's psychological closet dramas, I sought to mimic the philosophical explorations he enacts. Gilbert and George's Gordon's Makes Us Drunk and Nauman's 1966 silent black-and-white film Smoke show simple shots of artists drinking or smoking. However these are clichés universal to wider culture and the larks of 60's conceptual practices were reflections on how meaning and understanding in the larger popular media are based so much on assumptions and clichés.

PL So why do you choose to perform these three clichéd actions in these particular locations?

MJ As a North American in London I was drawn to these locations as places in juxtaposition with the 'non-places' of the post-modern city where I came from. I was interested in them as antiquated remnants of the London I knew through literature and cinema. It could be any old graveyard, Victorian pub or back alley in London but they're in fact 'authentic' places where people seeking a genuinely atmospheric setting might go to escape the destinations of the modern retail and leisure economy. This ironical effort being symptomatic of post-modernity where simulations substituting for the past stand in for a sense of local history and memories. I enacted these sentiments in these locations through the use of an aerosol-can of fake smoke, novelty shop fake beer powder and dummy cigarette in a effort to find some remnant of their authenticity.

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PL It's fitting then that William Blake is thought to be buried in Bun hill Fields and although a gravestone commemorates him, it doesn't mark the true location of his remains. It can be difficult to discern where reality ends and artifice begins in your films. However the obvious condition about film making in general is a suspension of disbelief. The thing with your Film Fragments is that from the beginning you are putting the cards on the table; you are describing the suspension of disbelief to the viewer. The viewer comes to understand that what they are witnessing is based on false pretenses.

MJ Yes, it appears that I am sitting against this gravestone in a melancholic reverie as a fog wafts through the air. But if you look closely, the fog is coming from a spray-can I am holding behind the gravestone. Once people notice it they often laugh a little.

PL That brings us to the question of humor because the old film look your using suggests some naïve idea of nostalgia but then you completely undermine that by the fact they are actually very humorous. How important is humor for this work?

MJ
I don't considered the work to be unserious but it's intellect is deflected by humour. I think the naive idea of nostalgia your describing is coming from a current inclination in our culture towards antiquity, central to this idea is the sentiment that things were decidedly better before. The nostalgic 'look' to these films is a built-in description of its own artifice, because they were obviously made in 2006. The intention in making artifice present is all of these is to demonstrate how it can sometimes stand in for the real and this comes across as humorous.

PL The other work I've seen by you is the film you made at the Economist Building. In particular there is a scene where you are driving this tiny electric car, encircling the plaza in mimicry of the opening scene to Michelangelo Antonioni's1960's film Blow Up. Once again there is something comical in such a tiny vehicle being driven around and around.

MJ Using the electric car was a way of re-invigorating that particular scene in the present. Originally I think it was an army Land Rover that encircles the Economist Plaza in Blow Up. Antonioni used that vehicle to connote the anti- Vietnam war atmosphere of 1960's London as the 4x4 was operated by a rabble of bohemian mimes. I was interested by how these utility vehicles have since been co-opted into a status symbols as SUV's. I speculate that this famous scene from Blow UP was, in part, the origin of this environmentally destructive trend. Ironically, the electric car that I used in re-shooting the scene resembles a tiny SUV, a 4x4 clown car, which inverted the intimidating presence of Range Rovers in urban streets.

PL On the one hand your films are very much about a location; the location where you choose to film. But on the other hand you are also referencing a piece of film history. Is this part of a programmed investigation or did it just happen that way?

MJ In the case of the Economist film, I was investigating the cultural significance of Alison and Peter Smithson's Late-Brutalist architecture as the embodiment of the Economist Magazine. I was setting out to make a Newsreel style film about the building that houses the world's most widely read magazine and came across this scene from Blow Up in the process.

PL The Economist film takes on an iconic 1960's piece of filmmaking but do your film fragments take on classic Hollywood?

MJ As you pointed out the Fragments take on clichés that re emerge throughout artistic practices and popular culture. However, I didn't intend to take on specific Hollywood films so much as to try to underscore the dystopia perpetuated by mainstream culture.

Pablo Lafuente is an independent curator and the Managing Editor of Afterall Journal based out of London and Los Angeles.

Michael Jones graduated from Slade School of Fine Art in 2006, he is a visual artist based in London.

Pablo Lafuente, 'Film Fragments: Michael Jones in conversation with Pablo Lafuente, 16 July 2006

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Exhibition:
Yesterday's Future Now, 2006
The Contemporary Art Society and
the Economist Group, London (UK)



The Economist, 2006
16mm film
7.5 min.

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Presented by Contemporary Art Society, The Economist Building provides the only outdoor public exhibition space in Central London committed to a continuous programme of sculptural works by contemporary artists.

CONTEMPORARY ART SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMIST GROUP ANNOUNCE THE EXHIBITION:

Michael James Jones
Yesterday's Future Now
13 February - 17 March 2006

Michael James Jones has created a silent black-and-white 16mm film with a looping series of scenes shot at *The Economist*'s headquarters in St James's. The artist pays homage to the building's status as a social and architectural landmark since it was built in 1964. The "open-aesthetic" of the building was celebrated in the sixties as heralding a humanistic vision for the future. Its design expresses and welcomes social connections to this day.

The artist explains, "The proposed film explores the discrepancies between the concerns of the Smithsons represented by *The Economist*, contrasted with the social and philosophical realities the world has seen since. These changes are signalled through the structural and logistical modifications the buildings have undergone since completion over 40 years ago."

One scene follows a businessman undergoing a tight security check at reception as he proceeds through the glazed porch. This 1984 extension ensures a single entry point, necessitated by the rise of terrorism and crime. Another highlights an original interior architectural feature: the ceiling air ducts, dubbed "luminaires". A graphic designer working at her desk is overcome with ennui and impulsively climbs into this air vault in an escapist fantasy.

Michael Jones also emphasises the significance of the building in film history. Shots of an electric car circling the exterior plaza retrace the opening scene of Michelangelo Antonioni's iconic 1966 film "Blow Up", in which a jeep filled with bohemians whizzes around in a spirit of exhilarating liberation.

Press release for *Yesterday's Future Now*, Contemporary Art Society and The Economist Group, 2006

We promote the collecting of contemporary art through our gifts to public museums and the advice and guidance we offer companies and individuals
Contemporary Art Society

The Economist Group

The leading source of analysis on international business and world affairs

THE ARTIST

Michael Jones is currently a post-graduate student in Fine Art Media at the Slade School of Fine Art. The artist would like to express his gratitude to Goingreen for the loan of a G-wiz car for the production of this film.

DAILY SCREENINGS

4PM - 10.30PM

The Economist building is open daily from 10.00 - 18.00 at 25 St. James's Street London SW1A 1HG

For further information, please contact the Contemporary Art Society on 020 7612 0730 or email cas@contempart.org.uk

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Previews

Lee Ufan



'Dialogue'

★★★★★★

Lisson Soho to Hampstead

There's a strong minimalist flavour to the work of Lee Ufan – hardly surprising, as the art movement he led in the 1960s, 'mono-ha' (Japanese for 'object school'), is often viewed as a parallel to such Western developments as minimalism and anti-form – though with less of an attitude of purism and rigorous formalism. Rather, Ufan's brand of minimalism uses materials in an allegorical way to create something much more zen-like and poetic.

His most recent paintings all feature the recurring motif of a trapezium-like wedge – in different permutations of size and orientation – floating within an otherwise empty canvas. Applied in repeated brushstrokes, the mixture of oils with crushed sandstone produces an effect that seems both unctuous and powdery. There are other contrasts too: shades ranging from dark grey to almost white; or the thick ridge of paint, from where Ufan's brush first touched the canvas, that thins as his stroke progresses. Entitled 'Dialogue', these works are meant as studies of difference, mediations on change.

In Lisson's second venue, a selection of Ufan's 'Relatum' sculptures continue the dialectic theme. Large sandstone rocks and great, rectangular slabs of iron are arranged in different combinations and positions. Again, a series of contrasts suggest themselves: between three-dimensional object and two-dimensional plane; between the natural shaping of river-erosion and the precision of industrial manufacture; perhaps even between female and male. Indeed, the sculptures invite such humanistic readings. In one piece a flat iron sheet coquettishly lifts its nearest edge a fraction off the ground, as if flirting with the leaning boulder opposite, irresistibly attracting this immovable object. *Gabriel Coxhead*

Viva Lolita

★★★★★★

Maddox Arts Mayfair to Sloane Square

Given this group show's title and aims you could be forgiven for expecting some sort of run-of-the-mill 'shocking' fare. But Bellmer or Balthus this is not, and there's nothing especially shocking here, unless you're delicate enough to be affronted by slightly risqué curatorial concepts.

Presumably the intention was to explore problematic cultural phenomena (sexualised young girls in fashion and the media, generalised panic over paedophiles, and so on) by way of art which would reflect or complicate such matters. However, much of the work seems only tangentially related to the 'Lolita' theme, and the mental stretch it would take to see some of it in that context is rather more alarming than anything in the works themselves; it quite possibly detracts from them. Post-graf artist Faffi's Vaughn Bodé-ish 'Fafinettes', for instance, have a cartoonish sexuality which is more Jessica Rabbit than Nabokov; several of the other works, such as those by Hellen Van Meene and Charlotte Beaudry, would also fare better under different circumstances.



'Untitled' by Charlotte Beaudry

This is always the danger of high concept shows where the curator is the star (in this case James Putnam, who has in the past been responsible for some very interesting projects, at the British Museum and elsewhere); everything appears under the sign of a central concept, and the atmosphere is already thick with interpretations and readings before the work has had a chance to breathe. The results often end up jumbled, as works which do not sit well with each other are forced to speak for someone else – and it doesn't help matters if the quality is patchy, as it is here. *Francis Gooding*

Exhibition of the week

If



Still from 'This is my Land' by Ben Rivers

★★★★★★

Bloomberg King's Cross to Shoreditch

For an exhibition with the subheading 'people and places in recent film and video', there's a definite mood more reminiscent of times past than present in the shorts by the five artists selected here – be it in the choice of grainy black-and-white film, a slow-paced, observational documentary style, a slideshow structure or the use of actual old footage and recordings.

Ben Rivers' black-and-white film 'This is My Land' focuses on an isolated, ramshackle dwelling in the middle of a Scottish forest and its lone, bearded occupant. Nothing much happens but we experience the season's change from summer to winter through lingering longshots and close-ups – birdsong and mismatched socks hanging out to dry or the crunch of snow underfoot in a Narnia-like landscape. Whether the focus is on a congregation of Pentecostal worshippers – seen wailing, weeping and rocking as they pray in Mark Boulos' 'The Word Was God', or the title subject of Stephen Connolly's 'Film for Tom', heard poignantly describing his own lack of a sense of self, these films explore psychological and emotional as well as physical space and what is heard can be as arresting as what is seen, perhaps most evocative in Stephen Sutcliffe's use of archive poetry readings.

There's a mix of fact and fiction, optimism and melancholy, and in Dwight Clarke's 'Superjednostka Rock Space', also a hint of menace, but what all the work provides is a welcome open space for contemplation by the viewer, something that's often missing in a culture more attuned to quick-click, quick-fix visual overload. *Helen Sumpter*

Things that go Bump in the Night



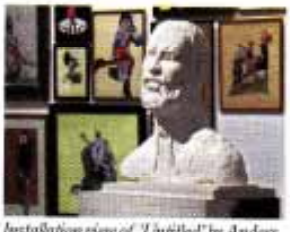
Detail from 'Afternoon in the Sculpture Park' by Edwina Ashton

★★★★★★

Cafe Gallery South Bank to Deptford

With a couple of exceptions, this isn't a show featuring ghosties and ghoulies, as its title might suggest, but of work by 12 artists that in various ways and in various media represents a view of life that is somehow at odds or out of wack with the norm. Of course that could describe the majority of contemporary art but there are some strong choices here, particularly the films – by Lucy Pawlak, Michael James Jones and Edwina Ashton – that also ably fit the brief. Ashton's endearingly weird creatures (mostly the artist in home-sewn costumes), seem more human than animal as they carry out mundane chores – a bat brushing some trees, a caterpillar drawing the curtains – each hampered by the restrictions of their unrealistic, stitched-together anatomy. Jones' two short films neatly demonstrate that there can be smoke without fire while Pawlak's performances in her sepia-tinged fairytale scenarios have the same unsettling feel of cult children's TV classic 'The Singing Ringing Tree'.

Paul Harper & Andrea Heller's 'Death Juke Box' will appeal to all list-lovers. Using a clairvoyant they've compiled lists of the current top ten albums of ten deceased music industry people (also playable on a juke box in the gallery). Whether you believe that Syd Barrett is on the other side rocking out to the Rolling Stones' 'Aftermath' and James Brown is currently playing Ray Charles and Little Richard on his celestial CD player or not doesn't really matter, it's still an addictive and entertaining read. *Helen Sumpter*



Installation view of 'Untitled' by Anders Clausen and collages by Jay Cloth

Lee Ufan, 'Things that go Bump in the Night', *Time Out London*, April 10-16 2008, p. 66

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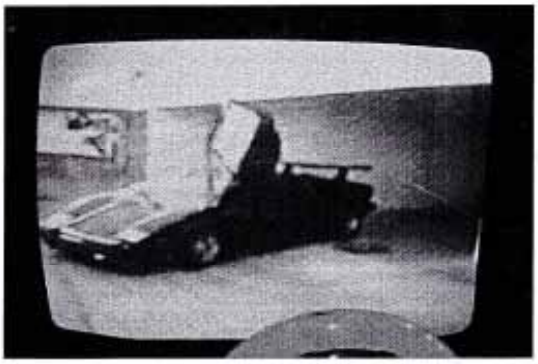
Park the Bull

BRENDAN MCGILLICUDDY ON RECENT WORK BY Michael Jones



Michael Jones, *Park the Bull*, 2003, interactive installation using a parking meter, found video (internet), various electronic components and a DVD player (exhibited at the Mutton Busting Festival in the Epcor centre for Performing Arts, Calgary, in January 2004)



The 1967 film *Cool Hand Luke*, starring Paul Newman, opens with angst. It begins with Luke drinking beer and decapitating parking meters with a pipe cutter. Most of Luke's problems arise out of trying to get even with an institution doing him wrong. Perhaps Michael Jones can relate.

An old uprooted parking meter sits discreetly at the top of a flight of stairs, marking the transitional space between the Encore Centre for the Performing Arts and the plus-fifteen pedestrian route. The object seems understated even though it is estranged from its proper context; its industrial yellow head camouflages itself into the accommodating yellow of the Encore Centre walls and is inconspicuously placed amidst fake plants. The quite presence of Jones's *Park the Bull* makes for an interesting discovery for an observant passerby.

Behind the meter is a screen revealing itself through a painted black glass vitrine. The screen tauntingly repeats the command "INSERT COIN" in red Arial text. If a coin is inserted, a video begins to play... the loud growl of an engine emanates from inside the glass vitrine while a pixilated internet quality video image of a man parks his black Lamborghini Countach. This is an unrewarding video if you're used to Hollywood cinema's stimulating narrative and don't like wry humour.

Park the Bull does not give the spectator the ride they are paying for. Instead, It gives a denouement to what may have been an adrenaline rushing experience of speed and grandeur. The piece leaves the viewer humbled, longing for an experience they may never have. In turn, one ponders about the man who has the key to this experience and can have it at whim.

One might think about ownership: did someone place a video on the web of himself parking his Lamborghini in order to show that he is the one who owns it? An assumption attached to the Lamborghini is that whoever owns one has a lot of money; a Lamborghini is a metonym for wealth.

Michael Jones is making money off someone else's money and inserting it into his pocket. It is evident who Cool Hand Luke is getting even with, but the question remains – who is Jones getting even with? He is either getting even with the spectator, the man driving the Lamborghini or society at large. The power of *Park the Bull* resides in this open-ended proposition. ■

Brendan McGillicuddy, 'Park the Bull',
Current Projects, No.5 2003, p. 5

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Michael **Jones**

IN CONVERSATION WITH **RYAN SLUGGETT**

Michael Jones, *APOCELIPSE*, 2003, film and video installation.





The following is from a discussion that took place on March 11, 2003 between Ryan Sluggett and Michael Jones about Jones's installation *APOCELIPSE* at the Marion Nichol Gallery, March 10-16, 2003. *APOCELIPSE* is a free-standing cylindrical space which one enters to see two images being projected onto the interior of the curved space. One projection is a film loop that rotates clockwise, the other is a video loop that rotates counter-clockwise (the images in both cases are reflected off rotating mirrors). The images cross paths randomly.

MICHAEL JONES: There are basically two components to my installation: a 6 mm film I took by walking around the top of the St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and a digitally-created video of radioactive snowfall or nuclear fallout. The film aspect is not any more real than the other aspects – although it has the connotation of being more real. Film, by its nature, is associated with a more authentic experience, more so than something that is digital and that is clearly a false fabrication. When these two mediums – video and film – overlap, there is a sort of revelation. Both images are revealed to have no content – and yet their overlap causes a new form to be created. What that is I don't know. What I am trying to get at is an expression of how we constantly anticipate the overlapping of these mediated fictions with our real life experience.

RYAN SLUGGETT: Is this work then about that anticipation more than proposing any actual experience/place of such anticipation?

MJ: Yes, because the film and video images have none of the weight of an apocalyptic image in them. But then again what about the experience/place of living within a media world? The images on TV of 9/11 have been made so familiar to us through similar depictions in fictive media that we almost didn't believe them although we knew that they happened. What does that indicate about our reality?

RS: To me our collective reality consists of fear and guilt. There is fear of what we are doing wrong in our global world and there is the guilt that comes along and tells us to be better citizens. This is a scary challenge. It's cyclical. And yet here you have negated that anticipation with endless combinations of collision points between the two projections verging on the ridiculous.

MJ: But at the same time through this negation there is the acknowledgement that anticipation is all there is. You think that people are stuck with fear and guilt, and I think that that is absolutely right, but in that there is an endless cycle. This is perpetuated when one exerts some form of control over others and then realizes what one has done to get that control. This is just the endlessness of the human condition. And the whole idea of the apocalypse is that it is an end to something that began once. I think this linearity of thought is false. The whole idea that there will be an end and it's simply a matter of *when* gives us a false expectation. There is only a now.

RS: Much 'political art' has the unwarranted hope to change things but is incapable of doing so without the sophisticated means of mass distribution needed for such change. How does an artist cope?

MJ: I'm unsure of this question because I don't think that I have the confidence to think I could make such a change even if the means were in place. I'm making art to be engaged in the world at large but introspectively. Through art I can dominate my realm. I can control all of the variables, and therefore I didn't need or expect to change the world at large. I only hope that what I make might be meaningful for others.

RS: This way you can turn 'inside' and self-reflect, but at the same time you are very much dealing with the communication structure of the 'outside.' Does this present a conflict?

MJ: Well, the whole process is angst-ridden because you know that nothing can be expressed beyond the bounds of communication. I really don't even believe I can achieve what I'm trying to achieve by making this.

RS: Then what satisfaction is there?

MJ: I wouldn't say it's any kind of satisfaction. I would just say that the alternative is worse: either hypnotism – meaning disengagement – or narcosis, a state where you are unable to do anything or are unable to deal with the world.

RS: But is it the artist's job to propose new alternatives in dealing with the world?

MJ: I'm not capable of offering a package of resolution that's going to be totally clear and change lives. I'm really just trying to figure out what I can do for myself – I really can't pretend to do that for others. ■

Ryan Sluggett, 'Michael Jones in conversation with Ryan Sluggett', No.4 2003, p. 13

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